

MILITANT ISLAM: THE HISTORIC WHIRLWIND: ISLAM ISLAM

By G.H. Jansen  
*New York Times (1923-Current file)*; Jan 6, 1980;  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008)  
pg. SM4

MILITANT ISLAM:  
THE HISTORIC  
WHIRLWIND

The fury of the revolution in Iran is not new. Periodically, throughout its 1,400-year history, the Moslem world has clashed with the West.

By G.H. Jansen

The holding of the American hostages in Teheran is just one event in the cyclonic turbulence that has swirled across the Islamic world. It is a cyclone that is far from blown out. These violent events are themselves only the latest episode in Islam's response to external challenges coming mainly from the West.

If these events have proved anything it is that the Moslem world holds a specific grudge — a political one — against the West, particularly the United States. The anti-American demonstrations that took place after the recent seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, for which the United States was in no way responsible, showed that Moslems across the Islamic world assumed the United States was the prime enemy of their faith. The bill of particulars against the United States is long, but the major charge is that America, by supporting Israel, is helping to keep

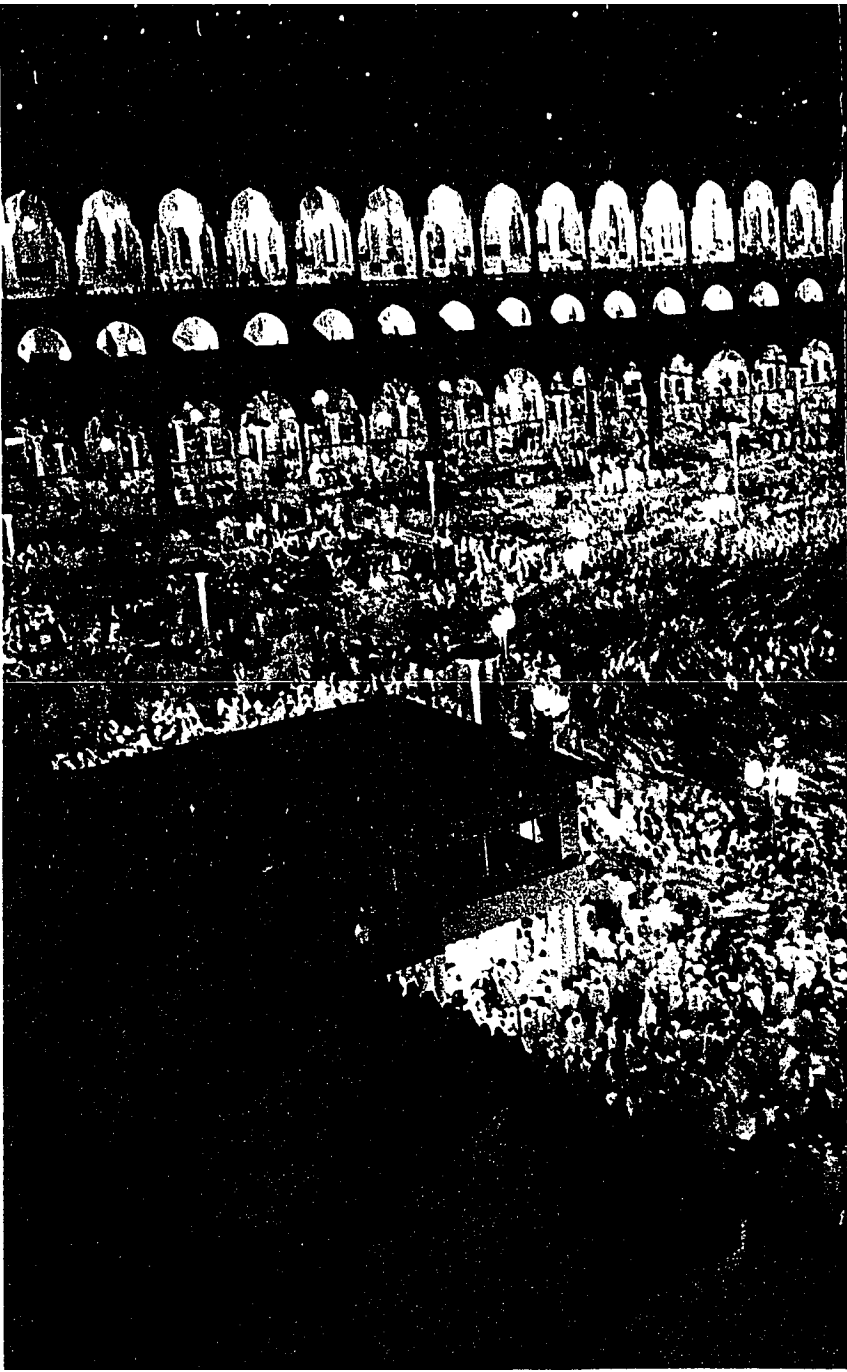
G.H. Jansen is the Mideast correspondent for The Economist of London. This article is adapted from his book, "Militant Islam," to be published this month by Harper & Row.

Moslems from Jerusalem and their third holiest shrine.

The trouble in the Islamic world has been brewing for a number of years. Since 1973, in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war, it has been gradually borne in on the minds of Western observers that something was happening out there in the East, a lowering thunderstorm moving out of Asia. It was, of course, the oil embargo imposed by Moslem countries that drove the point home to every Western citizen through sheer physical discomfort and inconvenience. Since then, evidence of a political resurgence of Islam in many Moslem countries has accumulated with increasing speed.

The image that the Western observer could take away from his contemplation of this vast, turbulent, unsettled area is one of precarious unease and violence — of strange, bearded men with burning eyes, hieratic figures in robes and turbans, of blood dripping from the stumps of amputated hands and from the striped backs of malefactors, and piles of stones barely concealing the battered bodies of adulterous couples.

In their present-day form these stereotypes are the echoes and resonances of such evocative words as "Moor," "Turk," "Arab," "dervish," "Fuzzy Wuzzy" and "mad mullah." The mental pictures summoned are of



This time exposure shows Moslems in Mecca making the seven circuits of the



Kaaba, Islam's most sacred shrine. The pilgrimage, or hajj, to the Kaaba — briefly captured by extremists in November — is the spiritual climax of a Moslem's life.



Moslem militants display a blindfolded hostage, one of those taken prisoner at the United States Embassy in Teheran Nov. 4.

Blocked due to copyright.  
See full page image or  
microfilm.

Baluchi rebels are photographed

Blocked due to copyright.  
See full page image or  
microfilm.

David Barrett/Corbis

near Kandahar on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Moslem fundamentalists are important in today's guerrilla movements throughout the world of Islam.

Blocked due to copyright.  
See full page image or  
microfilm.

David Barrett/Corbis

Last month these Pakistani members of the Shiite sect practiced ritual self-flagellation on the day commemorating the martyrdom of Hussein, Mohammed's grandson.

green banners fluttering over Turkish cavalry galloping into the heart of Europe up along the Danube, of those same green flags flaring over the camel-riding hordes of the Mahdi, trying to break the British military square.

In the contemporary world, the Arab has been incarnated by the American cartoonist as the fat oil sheik who seeks to buy up or bankrupt the West. Moslems have, in turn, hurt the West's faith, pride and pocketbook, and they are still at it, more than ever.

In fact, the West should have got used to the encounter with Islam; since 1500 there has scarcely been any five-year period when Moslems have not been in arms against Europe somewhere in the Moslem world, and usually in more than one country at the same time.

What is militant Islam up to? It is, for the most part, a sincere attempt by leaders, some of them men of religion, some of them religious laymen for whom religion is a living, vital faith, to remodel their public and private life — politics, economics, law, social mores — according to the precepts of their faith. That surely is laudable or at least understandable: after all, Islam is monotheistic, is counted among the "higher religions" and is universal; its followers number almost a fifth of the human race.

There are about 750 million Moslems in the world today to be found in more than 70 countries, and this is counting only the countries where the Moslem population is indigenous. Islam is as worldwide a faith as Christianity (1 billion followers). Adherents are everywhere, but its major strength is in certain continents — for Christianity, Europe and the Americas; for Islam, Asia and Africa. What is striking is that Islam's strength in Africa is rapidly growing. Twenty-five years ago it was estimated that one in four, perhaps one in three, Africans was Moslem. By the early 1980's over half of the population of Africa should be Moslem.

Why does this continuing assertiveness exist within Islam and not, in anything like the same strength, in the two other multinational religions, Christianity and Buddhism? The most obvious but least mentioned reason is youth. Islam is just under 1,400 years old; Christianity is getting on toward 2,000, and Buddhism was born 2,600 years ago. As living things, religions have their own morphology and should not, therefore, be strangers to the waning powers of middle and old age (see chart, Page 19). In the year A.D. 1400, the Christian Church was incomparably the most powerful and vital force in what had become its European homeland: it was just a century away from the climactic summation of Aquinas, within half a century of the poetic summation of Dante and of the terrors and ecstasies of the Black Death. The new impulse of the Reformation was just beginning to be felt. Although by A.D. 800, the 1,400th year of its life, Buddhism was showing signs of old age, it was still widely practiced through the length and breadth of India (from which it was ultimately expelled) and was the main religion of Af-

ghanistan and central Asia. Islam, then, is now in its vigorous early middle age.

It is, in its provenance, a third-world religion, a religion of backward areas, of nonmodernized, nonindustrialized areas. Hence it has not, unlike Christianity, been attacked by all the corroding acids of modernity.

The lower-middle classes are among the most devout, not to say fanatical, elements of Islamic society. The clerks and small-shop keepers are the most fervent supporters of fundamentalist and reform movements in the partially urbanized societies of Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Iran and Turkey. Both in the very heart of fashionable Cairo and in the industrial estates, roads are blocked as the faithful overflow across them for the Friday noon prayers. It remains to be seen what the effect will be of the really massive industrialization under way in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and, until the Shah's overthrow, in Iran.

Islam is simple and easy. The essentials of faith and practice are contained in the Koran and other canonical books and based on five religious duties, the "five pillars" of Islam, established by the Prophet Mohammed. These are: the affirmation of the faith; the *zakat*, or obligatory alms tax; the five daily prayers; the month of fasting — Ramadan — and the pilgrimage to Mecca, known as the hajj, that the faithful must make at least once in their lifetime. "There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet." This affirmation is all that a convert to Islam has to say to become a Moslem. Belief in the prophethood of Mohammed and in his guidance is one of the three basic articles of Moslem faith. The other two are belief in the unity of God and in life after death and the last judgment.

As a modern demonstration of the unity and vitality of Islam, the pilgrimage, or hajj, is a spectacular event. It is

the largest multinational gathering of human beings on the face of the earth today. In the last two years, around 1.5 million pilgrims from more than 70 countries have flooded into Mecca and the barren valleys beyond.

For the ordinary pilgrim, the hajj, in its present vastly expanded form, can be not only an exalting but a terrifying experience. For here one has illiterate Berber villagers from the remote valleys of the High Atlas, Kurds from the equally remote Zagros, pilgrims from the rice fields of Bangladesh or the coconut groves of Indonesian islets facing the Pacific, people speaking little-known languages, or even less-known dialects or subdialects, who have never left their villages before. No wonder the professional guides, without whom the hajj would quickly collapse into chaos, often rope their charges together and provide them with distinctive flags and badges.

To the disappointment of the older pilgrims, it is now very difficult to die on the hajj (to die while performing it is believed to ensure paradise). This is so because the Saudi Arabian Government has been spending much effort and money to improve communications and health conditions. Quarantine camps, a good water supply and the aerial spraying of disinfectants have made the hajj, once a dreaded center of epidemics, now disease-free.

The down-to-earth, practical aspect is not absent from the hajj. Businessmen from all over the Moslem world find it very useful for making contacts, and many contracts are signed. It is also, especially for the Saudis, a good time for arranging marriages, particularly since the young women are, perforce, unveiled.

Since the exponents of militant Islam are more than usually vigorous in extolling the excellence of Islam, both as a

religion and a polity, they are having to face certain accusations against their faith that have been made against Islam for more than 1,000 years. These are that Islam was spread by the sword, wielded in the *jihad*, or holy war; that the total legal entity known as Shariah or Shariah law lays down punishments for some crimes that are barbaric, especially for the present age; that Islamic economics are unrealistic because they are based on the prohibition of usury or *riba*; and that Islam's provisions on polygamy and divorce impose on women an inferior position in society.

It must be said that all these are indeed sanctioned by the Koran. For the fundamentalist, that is the final answer to all non-Moslem objections; and that, quite simply, is the attitude today of the governments of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

However, clarification seems called for on the matter of jihad, or holy war. The word itself simply means "effort." One of the earliest of the extreme sects, the Kharijists, tried to make jihad the sixth pillar of Islam, but this was not accepted. In almost all the wars — or, rather, raids — launched by Mohammed from Medina the pagan tribes attacked were indeed given no choice but conversion or death, because in those early years Mohammed could not accept submission and an alliance unless it was cemented by conversion to his faith. But Jews, Christians and members of other monotheistic religions had the third option of becoming a "protected community" under the Islamic state, with the payment of an annual tribute in money or kind. Once the Moslem home base of Arabia had been converted from paganism and consolidated, and the Arab armies swept into nonpagan areas, conversion became of minor importance.

In any case, this is now merely an academic historical question; the

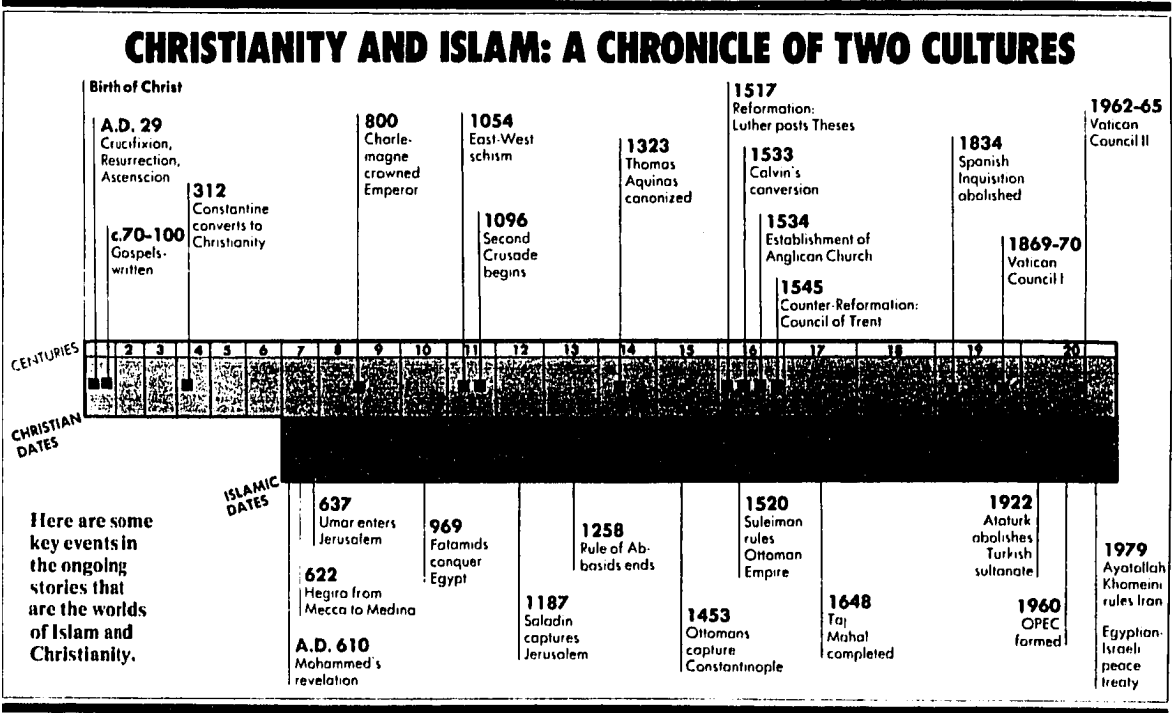


image of the Moslem armies converting as they advanced has sunk so deeply into the Western mind that no amount of repetition of the truth is likely to dislodge it. What is more to the point is that there is no Moslem army today that could or would undertake jihad. The last time the call to jihad was seriously made was in 1914, when the last of the real pan-Islamic caliphs, the Sultan of Turkey, called on his co-religionists to join the war on the side of Germany. Turkey's ally: it was a total failure. There have been several calls for jihad since then, especially against Israel, none of which have been effective.

The only explanation Moslems give for the canonical punishments is that they are hedged around with conditions that are almost impossible to fulfill. Thus, there must be four reliable eyewitnesses testifying to adultery before a couple can be found guilty and stoned to death. Likewise, a man can take himself four wives only if he behaves justly to all of them. Also, it is agreed that *riba* applies to usury and not to normal financial gains on investment. None of these explanations is very convincing, and the reformist Moslem has yet to come to terms with the problem that, although certain elements in Koranic legislation may have been suitable for seventh-century Arabia, and may even have represented advances on the customs of the time, they do not conform to the spirit of the times in the last quarter of the 20th century.

How very different the history of Islam would have been, how much more like the comparatively tranquil history of Buddhism, if its original home had been, say, Indonesia and its main area of belief Southeast Asia. But, at home at the crossroads of three continents, hard by an energetic and eventually expansionist Europe, Islam has always had to be vigilant in its defense. It has resisted the blandishments of Christian missionaries, retaken lands claimed by expanding European colonialism and begun to erase the effects of cultural deracination produced by its conflicts with the West. It should be said, however, that Islam does not as yet seem to have found an answer to the overall challenge of Western civilization — specifically, the so-called youth culture, which poses a

tremendous problem in the post-Beatles age.

Once Europe had embarked on the course of empire, it was inevitable that the European powers should have to clash with the Moslem world because it lay in a great crescent around the southern and eastern perimeter of the European continent. So, we may ask, apart from this compulsion of geography, how far were these endless wars specifically wars of religion between Christianity and Islam? For the Moslems, at the receiving end, they were all wars of religion waged in defense of hearth and home but also and more so in defense of Islam. The defenders always saw themselves as copying the example of Saladin, who expelled the European Crusaders from Palestine in 1187.

Could there have been an Afro-Asian movement without Islam? This may seem a surprising question because the assumption is that the nationalist movements that rolled up the imperial carpet in Afro-Asia in 20 swift years after 1947 were "modern" — and therefore secular. So they may have been in such leading Afro-Asian countries as Indonesia, India, Egypt and Ghana, but the secular nationalist inheritors came late to the political scene. The foundations as well as much of the new national superstructure were laid down and erected during the preceding 150 years by Moslem forces and Moslem leaders. Without politically militant Islam, freedom might have taken decades longer — that is, if militant Islam and the freedom struggle had not been one and the same thing earlier on in Indonesia, Afghanistan, the Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco and West Central Africa — in addition to the very large infusion of Islam in the national movement of Iran and some in that of Egypt.

Without Islam, the Afro-Asian movement would probably have aborted. And without the Afro-Asian movement, there would have been no non-aligned group of nations, and without that group, there would not have been the economic Group of 77, the underdeveloped South in the current North-South dialogue.

If Islam as a religion was little affected by the years of Christian missionary endeavor, or, as a polity, by the 150

(Continued on Page 43)

# ISLAM

*Continued from Page 20*

years of colonial conquest and imperial rule, there was one sphere — education — in which colonial rule did have a profound effect on Moslem society: because the foreign rulers, with rare unanimity and unusual purposefulness and pertinacity, sought to give as little education as possible — the wrong sort of education when it had to be given — and also to bring about a schism in the soul of the Moslem community.

The Western powers, the French especially, but also the Dutch, British and the Italians, deliberately mounted an onslaught on the minds of the youth of their subject peoples. Local educational systems were either destroyed, ignored or allowed to collapse by the colonial regimes. Since Arabic and Islamic tendencies were looked upon as dangerous and subversive, they had to be excluded. Therefore the new system that the colonial authorities introduced was wholly Westernized and used European languages exclusively. Yet the purpose was not to produce thoroughly Westernized young Moslems. Education had to serve the strictly limited purposes of the colonial administration by producing clerks and artisans, and in just sufficient numbers to keep the machine going. As far as higher education was concerned, the existing universities were also ignored, but nothing was put in their place in the conquered territories. Thus the intellectual elite of Moslem countries was forced to study, during the most formative years, in the universities of the metropolitan countries; this helped to make them aliens in their own countries, where they became the new rulers.

Having regained their land from foreign soldiers and administrators, the Moslem peoples are now trying to reclaim their brains and souls from the influence of foreign teachers. For militant Islam today, the real battle is in the schoolroom. In essence, the problem is one of switching the medium of instruction to the mother tongue and of Islamization. All the nations that constitutionally regard themselves as Islamic states have brought the teaching of Islam into the curricula of their public educational systems. This process has been going on for the past 25 years.

What the Islamic nations have accomplished — however partially so far — in redeeming, controlling and changing their educational systems in a specifically Islamic direction, amounts to the greatest single achievement of militant Islam to date. A massive achievement, it is of long-lasting import. If it has not been recognized as an aspect of militant Islam, this is only because it has been going on in separate countries over a space of years in inconspicuous schoolrooms and ministries of education. But this Islamization of the minds of hundreds of millions of young Moslems is more truly militant and Islamic than the chopping off of hands.

Whatever the successes of the Arab world in holding off the challenges of the West, political pressure has remained as a result of its conflict with Israel. Israel is seen by most of the Arab world as an outpost and bastion of Western civilization, holding out in the very center of the Islamic world.

The Arab heartland of Islam suffered a crushing military defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, a humiliation that was felt personally not only in Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the actual combatants, but by all the other Arab states and indeed the non-Arab Islamic nations as well. The defeat was so complete that it revealed the weakness not just of the Arab military machine but of the whole of Arab society, which is an Islamic society. In 1971 came the split (between Bangladesh in the east and West Pakistan) in what was then the largest Moslem state, Pakistan. The link of Islam had not been strong enough to hold an Islamic state together against the pulls of regionalism.

These two events were by themselves bad enough to shake the foundations of Islam, but there was also fighting among Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania, tension between Iraq and Iran, an increasingly unstable situation in Turkey; King Faisal of Saudi Arabia was assassinated. The ground was strewn with fallen idols: Sukarno, Ben Bella and Bhutto. From the mid-1950's on, after the larger Moslem countries had become independent, came other and more basic political reasons for self-doubt and disillusionment. None of the various political systems the Moslem states had adopted seemed to work satisfactorily: parliamentary democracy had been tried and failed; army regimes had been no more successful, nor had the system of single-party left-wing socialism.

Precisely because of their setbacks, the Moslem people turned more than ever to Islam and Islam became more militant. It is this defiant spirit of militancy in Islam, surfacing in several Moslem countries simultaneously, that caught the attention and the headlines of the rest of the world. But while defiant militancy was the public reaction, the private turning toward Islam was done to find something enduring that would give strength and comfort. One reaction fed the other. As more people prayed at home, went to prayers in the mosques, the Islamic leaders, some sincerely, some with opportunistic cynicism, decided that with this renewed popular Islamic resurgence the time had come for them to enunciate or implement more militantly Islamic policies at home and abroad.

Another smaller and not so reputable reason for the present surge in militant Islam is the effect of Saudi Arabian influence and finance, both of which increased greatly when the oil revenues of the world's largest oil exporter quad-

How very different the history of Islam would have been, how much more like the comparatively tranquil history of Buddhism, if its original home had been, say, Indonesia, and its main area of belief had been Southeast Asia. But at home as it was at the crossroads of three continents, hard by an energetic and eventually expansionist Europe, Islam has always had to be vigilant in its defense.

rupted as a consequence of the 1973 OPEC price hike. The Saudis would wish to see orthodox Islamic regimes established in as many Moslem countries as possible.

Militant Islam has not appeared in all the Islamic nations. In three of the Arab states — Iraq, Syria and Algeria — politically militant Islam would not be permitted by the regimes claiming the monopoly of political power, even though Algeria has a ministry of religious affairs and Islamic teaching.

Governmental reactions to militant Islam have had varied and very mixed motivation. In Indonesia, a reluctant government has been trying to preempt and outbid the Islamic groundswell. In Pakistan, militant Islam was at least partially a diversion from internal and external difficulties, in addition to being an expression of the continuing demand for an Islamic state that was Pakistan's very *raison d'être*. Much the same combination of pressures applied to Egypt, the Sudan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In Libya, the striving for an Islamic polity seemed genuine enough, at least as far as Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi himself was concerned, but it partook of his erratic nature. Algeria, too, wanted a genuine but strictly limited degree of militant Islam, which was well within the ambit of governmental policy: and it has emerged in Iran because the religious structure of the Shiite community was able to provide leadership for a revolution against the regime of the Shah.

An explanation might be in order here of the striking difference between the political role of the religious leaders (*ulema*) in Sunni countries and that of the men of religion in Iran. Even in those countries, such as Indonesia and Pakistan, where the Sunni ulema are organized and active in politics, they are never dynamically so and, almost deliberately, hang back cautiously from any position of leadership; they have seldom if ever taken the initiative. Such has never been the case in Iran, where the Shiite ulema have always been the dynamic initiating leaders in every national crisis. The Shiite type of religious feeling was evident from very early on in the history of Islam, indeed from long before the time when the Shiites formally became a separate sect. The core of the Shiite faith is that

the earthly community should be led by a charismatic, semidivine leader, the imam, who acts as the mediator between the human and divine, while the Sunni belief is that the individual stands directly face to face with God, with no need for an intercessor. Buddhism and Christianity have split in similar schisms along this fault line in the human soul: (Shiite) Mahayana Buddhism and (Sunni) Hinayana Buddhism, (Shiite) Roman Catholicism and (Sunni) Protestantism.

Observers of the popular movement in Iran, which, during the latter half of 1978, generated enough strength to uproot the Shah and his regime, were puzzled by one aspect of it: it was apparently very well organized and yet no organization as such was visible. The evidences of organization were only too clear — the disciplined control of vast emotional crowds, the thousands of banners inscribed with the same messages, the well-orchestrated slogans, protest songs and poems; the leaflets, mimeographed sheets and cassettes bearing the exhortations of the then exiled Ayatollah Khomeini which were being distributed in the towns and cities of Iran within a matter of days, even hours, of their being issued from the Ayatollah's headquarters near Paris. The organization that made all this possible was invisible because it had been part of the human landscape of Iran for centuries and was taken for granted: it was the organization of the Shiite "church." The framework of this structure is Iran's 180,000 mullahs with the even more numerous mosque officials and shrine attendants they have around them. This body of clerics is a unified grouping because, at some time or other, they all passed through the theological training schools in the holy city of Qum. The majority of them are simple village boys who, after their training in Qum, are sent back to their villages and remain there as the center of village life for the rest of their careers: the humble nuts and bolts of the strong country-wide Shiah organization. (One source of Ayatollah Khomeini's popularity and power is that he still speaks with his original peasant accent.) The Shiah organization is strong because of the respect given to its members by the ordinary Iranian Shiah: the village cleric will not remain long in position if

What the Islamic nations have accomplished in changing their educational systems in a specifically Islamic direction amounts to the greatest single achievement of militant Islam.

he cannot be trusted enough to receive the various and sizeable taxes that Shiites pay into their community fund; it was this fund that provided the financial sinews of the revolution. To rise in the Shiite hierarchy, the Shiite cleric has to have the qualifications of leadership, learning, piety and poverty, and this last is especially essential for the highest grade of all, the Ayatollahs who embody the power of renunciation. Hence it was no great problem for the Shiite organization to put its own armed militia onto the streets of Iran's cities to fight and then take over from the disintegrating army of the Shah. This force was often led into combat by men of religion carrying guns. It was also only too easy for it to set up the Khomeini committees, or *komitehs*, that became the really effective government of Iran after the Shah's exit. In the long run, however, the militia and the *komitehs* are likely to prove more a curse than a blessing for the cause of militant Islam in Iran because they are too intolerant, vengeful and unaware of the larger issues of modern life.

There are two things militant Islam most emphatically is not: it is not Moslem nationalism and it is not pan-Islam. By Moslem nationalism is meant both the feeling within countries inhabited by Moslem peoples that such countries constitute separate nations and the inevitably concomitant nationalist feeling that each such nation is in some way not merely different from but superior to other countries, especially its neighbors. For the militant — or even the nonmilitant but devout — Moslem, such nationalist feelings are condemned not merely because they are narrow-minded or chauvinistic but because



Pakistan's first public flogging under orders of Gen. Zia ul-Haq in March 1978

they are irreligious, un-Islamic. Since it operates only on the secular level, political pan-Islam will always be defeated by the separate national interests of the Moslem states: witness the creation of Bangladesh, the wars in the Yemen, on the Egyptian-Libyan border and in the western Sahara.

What the Moslem reformers — or, at least, the Moslem Brotherhood — would like to see is something they call Islamism. In this scheme, the bricks of a new order for the Moslem world would be Islamic states, not national states, which would move through regional cooperation to overall Islamic unification. But even this nebulous plan is something that is said to be for the distant future.

□

Manifesting itself across the varied range of Moslem countries, which differ so greatly in geography, history and political systems, it was inevitable that militant Islam should be exemplified by differing sorts of leaders. At least three types may be distinguished: first, the professional politician, essentially secular, Westernized and non-Islamic, who simply harnesses the still-living force of Islam to achieve his political goals. These we may all the "exploiters."

The Moslem exploiter par excellence was Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who brilliantly manipulated the hopes and, mostly, the fears of Indian Moslems to bring that state to birth in 1947. In 1971, another

major exploiter of Islam took charge in Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. When Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq ousted Bhutto in July 1977 (and ultimately executed him), he, too, seemed to be courting cheap Islamic popularity, for soon afterward he decreed amputation the punishment for theft and public whipping for other offenses. Although, it cannot now be said with certainty that General Zia's other reforms are examples of exploitation of Islam, with the record of the previous rulers of Pakistan in mind, the suspicion remains — this in a country brought into existence solely on the basis of Islam.

It is the class of political exploiter of Islam that gives Islam a bad name and gives militant Islam an even worse name. For what the rest of the world sees is a secular leader in a Moslem country who suddenly and for obvious reasons of political convenience gets religion. Perhaps Islam should count itself lucky that there have been so few exploiters among its secular leaders.

The second group of leaders is the professional men of religion, the ulema. They are known to be conservative and traditionalist, but that indeed has been one of their achievements — the preservation of the traditions of Islam in living, not mummified, form.

As individuals, ulema can be found in the politics of every Moslem country, even if underground. In some countries they have organized themselves into recognized political groupings. Such are the Nahdatul Ulema in Indonesia;

(Continued on Page 60)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

# ISLAM

*Continued from Page 47*

two groups in Pakistan, the Jamaat i Ulema i Islam and the Jamaat i Ulema i Pakistan; the sheiks of Al Azhar in Cairo and the Rabitat Ulema al Maghreb in Morocco; lastly, the entire body of sheiks in countries like Saudi Arabia, which claim to be, already, Islamic states.

The third group represents the most serious, dynamic and, for the future, important element in militant Islam today. It is also the least known. These are the groups that are trying the very difficult task of "rethinking Islam in modern terms." They are: the Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt; the Party for the Liberation of Islam in Jordan; the Jamaat i Islami of Pakistan; the Masjumi Party in Indonesia, led by Mohammed Natsir; the Istiqlal party, led by Mohammed Boucetta in Morocco; the Iran Liberation Movement of the former Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan; the Mujahidin al Khalk in Iran, whose spiritual father was the Islamic scholar Dr. Ali Shariati, and, with reservations, the Libya of Colonel Qadafi.

These men and groups,

though Westernized, are not Westernizers but modernizers; though Islamic believers, they are not fundamentalists but reformers. There are wide variations of approach and even objective among them: while some want an Islamic society within an Islamic state, based on the Koran and the Sunnah (the "trodden path"), others want an Islamic society within an Islamic order, derived from the Koran and the Sunnah; some accept violence as a means, others do not. What unifies them is an attempt to make Islam, which is indubitably alive today, relevant to the special needs of today.

There is enough here to justify the experiment of the militant push toward the Islamic state. That push will come, whatever the evaluation of the possible result. For all Moslem countries are led — doomed, one might say — to do one of two things: to deny the essentials of Islam and opt for a secular state, or to go through the arduous struggle of trying to produce an Islamic state or an Islamic order. From that choice there is no escape. ■